

Planet Hoppers: Skako

A World Under Pressure

By Eric Cagle

Come along with Planet Hoppers to take a virtual tour of the planets, moons, and other points of interest in the *Star Wars* galaxy. Learn about the geography, politics, creatures, and sentient beings that make these places perfect for adventure.

Planet Features

Region: Core
Climate: Temperate (urban)
Gravity: Standard
Moons: 2
Length of Day: 27 standard hours
Length of Year: 370 local days
Sapient Species: 100% Skakoan (native)
Government: Corporate
Capital: None (planetwide)
Major Exports: Technology
Major Imports: Foodstuffs, medicinal goods

Knowledge (galactic lore)

DC RESULT

- 10 Skako is the home planet of the Skakoan, a species that has major influence in the enormous Techno Union.
- 15 The Techno Union has representation in the Galactic Senate and wields tremendous political power.
- 20 Like Coruscant, the surface of Skako is completely covered in a single, massive city. The planet's atmosphere is incredibly dense, meaning that few Skakoans leave, and few other sentients visit. Those that do require special pressure suits to survive.

Knowledge (social sciences)

DC RESULT

- 10 Skakoans are cold, calculating, and extremely logical in their thinking. Their written language is similar to engineering schematics, and their speech is close to Bocce and Binary.
- 15 Skakoans dislike many other species, especially Humans, and have a sympathetic view toward separation from the rest of the Galactic Republic.
- 20 Skakoans are very afraid of suffering a horrible death due to asphyxiation or explosive decompression. Those that leave the planet are considered incredibly brave or foolish by the rest of the species.

Skako is a rich and heavily populated planet in the Core. A world-spanning city covers its surface, and the planet is a major source of microelectronics, starship engineering, and cutting-edge manufacturing techniques. Visitors to Skako (see below) find a highly efficient, if joyless, world with technology that is slightly ahead of the galactic norm.

Skako, and thus the Skakoans, are among the most influential members of the Techno Union, a huge megacorporation with several well-known subsidiaries such as Baktoid Armor Workshop, Hoersch-Kessel Driveworks, Inc., and Balmorran Arms. Preceding the Clone Wars, the Skakoan foreman Wat Tambor pledged to support the Separatists under Count Dooku, resulting in the expulsion of the Techno Union from representation in the Galactic Senate. After the time of the Empire, the Imperials dismantled the Techno Union, and the xenophobic

Skakoans pulled away from the rest of the galaxy.

Ecology and Points of Interest

Skako's atmosphere is a methane gas base mixed with other exotic chemicals, and it is heavily pressured. This combination means that most sentient beings can survive on the planet only by wearing specialized pressure suits or by remaining in specific zones that are depressurized and filled with regular air.

Skako is an ecumenopolis -- a planet completely covered by a single worldwide city. Comparisons have been made to Coruscant, though Skako lacks much of the aesthetics, art, and vibrancy of that world. Most of the buildings are drab and functional, akin to the Skakoans themselves. The unique atmosphere also means that few sentients visit the planet and thus bring fewer influences, leaving a single monolithic culture.

Hardly any of Skako's original ecology survives, except for creeping vines that twist their way in and around older buildings. Some of these vines can grow to incredible thickness and length -- up to a hundred feet thick and a thousand miles long. Besides the Skako, the largest animals on the planet are the octuptarra, tall creatures with eight eyes and a gasbag-shaped head whose many legs allow them to clamber along vines. Many Skakoans keep small octuptarras as family pets, and the octuptarra combat tri-droids were inspired by their shape and movement.

An area known as the Power Mounds is the most sacred site of Skako and factors heavily into the complex religion of the Skakoans. It is the resting place of the Book of the Boolmide, kept and read by the Elders of the religion. Chosen individuals who travel to this place and read from the book can open the Gates of Grontessiant, a supposedly mythical realm.

New Species: Skakoan

Skakoans are cool, calculating, and humorless beings with a strong sense of self-preservation. Their thought processes are more akin to droids, focusing on logic and reason—showing emotion is both a rarity and sign of insanity. They have an innate understanding of machines and computers and are excellent engineers, although most Skakoans focus their energy towards business ventures. Due to their unique physiology, Skakoans must wear special pressure suits to survive off of their home planet.



Skakoan Species Traits

Skakoans share the following species traits.

Ability Modifiers: -2 Dexterity, +2 Intelligence. Skakoans lack agility but have a rigidly logical, almost computerlike mind.

Size: Medium

Bonus Feat: Armor Proficiency (light)

Mechanical Savant: Once per encounter, a Skakoan can make a standard action Mechanics or Use Computer check as a swift action.

Conditional Bonus Feat: Skakoans with Mechanics as a trained skill gain Skill Focus (Mechanics).

Special Equipment: Skakoans suffer limitations outside their native atmosphere. Without a pressure suit (see below), a Skakoan takes 1d6 points of damage each round and begins to suffocate. Skakoan characters begin play with a light pressure suit at no cost.

Automatic Languages: Basic, Skakoform (written)/Skakoverbal (spoken)

Skakoan Pressure Suits

In order to survive off planet, the Skakoans have created three types of pressure suits. The suits are as effective as certain types of armor, but they are bulkier due to the additional breathing equipment and pressurizers.

Light pressure suit: As armored flight suit (Speed –2 squares)

Medium pressure suit: As battle armor (Speed –1 square)

Heavy pressure suit: As armored spacesuit (Speed –1 square)

Adventure Seeds

Here are some ways to incorporate Skako into your adventures.

The heroes are sent to Skako to meet with key officials about the Techno Union's ties to the burgeoning Separatist Movement. After the Skakoans do their best to reassure the heroes of their intention to remain within the Republic, the heroes return to their quarters. An hour later, their pressure regulators and atmospheric scrubbers seemingly "fail," and the heroes must escape before they are crushed and/or asphyxiated.

After the Empire fell, the Skakoans barred entry to the planet to outsiders. However, word reaches back to the Jedi Council about a non-Skakoan child on the world who bears the signs of a powerful connection to the Force. Unfortunately, the child and her parents are trapped in one of the many sublevels of the city-planet and can neither leave nor reveal their presence to the Skakoans. The heroes must somehow find a way onto the planet, survive the toxic and crushing atmosphere, and rescue the child and her parents.

About the Author

Eric Cagle cut his teeth at Wizards of the Coast but now lives the extravagant freelancer lifestyle. Look for his name on everything from **Dungeons & Dragons** to **d20 Modern** to *Star Wars* products. Recent credits include the *Grimm* roleplaying game, *Tome of Salvation*, and *Hollow Earth Expedition*. Eric is currently the Managing Editor for *No Quarter Magazine*. He lives in Seattle, where the coffee is dark and bitter -- like his goddesses.